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Ithacan Admits She Gave Data To Red Agent

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WASHINGTON—A 28-year-old Ithaca, N.Y. woman has told the Justice Department that she was recruited by Soviet intelligence to furnish information about any American efforts to cause defections among Russian stage performers visiting the United States under the cultural exchange program. At the time, the address was the location of the headquarters of the Soviet Union delegation to the United Nations.

The woman, Miss Natalie Bienstock, a Cornell University instructor, said in two sworn statements that she sent, to a Soviet contact the names of agents of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation who had some association with Russian entertainers in this country. During the first part of this period, she was employed as a Russian interpreter and road company secretary by Hurok Attractions Inc., the large concert management firm in New York which handles almost all visiting Russian stage groups in this country.

She also said she turned in to her Soviet contact the name of a Russian ballerina who was regarded by Miss Bienstock as "a possibly disloyal citizen of the Soviet Union."

Miss Bienstock said in her statements to the Justice Department that an agent of an "unknown" American agency "wanted to pass a letter of unknown content" to the dancer, who was touring the United States as a member of the Leningrad Kirov Ballet.

Secret Writing

According to Miss Bienstock's statements, she transmitted the information in secret writing in a series of letters addressed to Leo Sorokine at 680 Park Ave., New York, and signed in code names.

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time around February, 1963," Miss Bienstock swore.

Severs Connection

Since then, she said in her statements to the Justice Department "I have ceased any and all activities and connections with any Soviet organization whatsoever."

Miss Bienstock told her own story in explicit detail in two statements filed with the Justice Department on Oct. 19.

One statement was filed under a law requiring registration by persons acting as agents of foreign governments or other foreign principals.

The other was filed under a little-known 1956 law requiring registration by persons trained in espionage or sabotage or receiving such an assignment from a foreign government.

Both laws provide that the registration statements are public records.

Sees Statements

Miss Bienstock's statements were examined by this reporter as public documents. Later, in a two-hour interview in Ithaca, she repeated the substance of the information and added many details.

In her Justice Department statements, she did not offer an explanation of why she undertook the Soviet assignment

or why, as she said, she eventually terminated it.

In the interview she indicated she had been coerced, while visiting Moscow as a tourist, into agreeing to carry out the mission. She said she realizes now she should have gone to the FBI immediately on her return to New York.

The whole thing was "a mistake, a terrible mistake" on her part, Miss Bienstock said.

Miss Bienstock said she filed her recent Justice Department statements after receiving a letter from the department directing her to do so.

She has not been charged with any law violation.

A short, bookish brunette, Miss Bienstock was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, of Russian-born parents. The family came to the United States, she said, in 1938. She was naturalized in 1945.

She said she is a graduate of City College in New York. Her father is dead, and her mother teaches in New York. She has no brothers or sisters.

According to her Justice Department statements, she traveled to Denmark and France in the summer of 1959; to the Soviet Union and France late in the same year; to Mexico in 1961; and to the Soviet Union and France in 1962, when she said she agreed to work for Soviet intelligence.

She said she made all these trips as a tourist.

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